

## **CHAP TALKING POINTS February 12, 2020**

- **Spending \$5,000 now to avoid spending \$400,000 in the future**

- By fitting an infant or toddler as soon as a hearing loss is identified, you will keep that child on par with their typical hearing peers. This means that the child will have a decreased risk of incurring costs associated with government funded programs such as special education as children and vocational rehabilitation, unemployment, and/or disability as adults. The goal for a child with hearing loss should be the same as a typical child: to become a healthy and productive adult.
  - Children who are delayed in receiving hearing aids until 3 yrs or later typically don't progress beyond a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level
  - It is more difficult for an adult with low reading abilities and ineffective communication skills to get and maintain a job as the vast majority of jobs out there require interpersonal communication or customer service skills
  - Example: Dr. Jenny Pedersen, CHAP Coordinator, started at a school district as an educational audiologist about 15 years ago. The school age children worked with were fit with their hearing devices at an older age (3-6 years of age). These children struggled in school and were in special education from preschool throughout high school. It was about 10 years ago that change started occurring so that new babies were being fit at 12 months or earlier. The difference is that the kids who were fit earlier and who have no other issues are now reaching junior high and high school age and have not needed special education assistance. They are doing well in school and are not utilizing audiologists, speech pathologists, or special education resources as they are on par with their typical hearing peers.

- **The brain has a short window for optimal learning**

- Every child that receives any type of special education resource for: cognition, behavior, communication, motor, or any other developmental concern are required to have a hearing and vision test. This is because every aspect of a child's development can be affected by these two senses. It is much easier to treat vision and hearing difficulties than to continue special education services. A child's brain is primed to learn behavioral, emotional, cognitive, communication skills up to age 3 when the brain growth starts to slow down. The child can obviously still learn throughout the rest of their life; however, 0-3 is the time that the greatest amount of learning occurs.
  - The brain has a hearing center that is dedicated to sound stimulation and interpretation. If that center is not utilized, the brain begins to use it for other things as synaptic connections are constantly occurring between 0-3. If the child receives a hearing aid later, the brain will use another area that is available (rather than the hearing center). This area still works and the child will hear; however, it is not nearly as efficient and high quality as the original hearing center.
  - Example: All children in special education, including pre-school, must receive a hearing screening. Dr. Pedersen was testing these young kids and found a child who failed their screening. Parent brought him in for a full diagnostic evaluation and he was diagnosed with hearing loss. The parent happened to come from a higher SES and was quick to take

her son for a confirmatory hearing test and to be fit with hearing aids. A few months later, the child was re-tested and disqualified for further services. It's important to note, he was still delayed; however, he had made an enormous amount of progress in learning, communication, and behavior skills. Simply because he could actually hear what he was being taught.

- **Adults vs children**

- There is a huge difference between children and adults who develop hearing loss. Adults have already learned a language base and completed basic education. An adult is okay to save up and wait to purchase hearing aids. A child has not developed a fluent language base or completed a basic education. In addition, children learn by incidental information. Overhearing and overseeing how adults interact is how we learn our societal rules and inclinations as well as our other milestone developments. It is imperative that a child receives intervention as early as possible so their learning can still occur when the brain is primed for learning.

- **CHAP allows for families to save for future hearing aids**

- CHAP pays for the first set of hearing aids so that parents can start saving up for their next set. Hearing aids are electronic devices and will usually need to be replaced for a child every 3 years. CHAP allows a family to put a hearing aid on their child immediately and start to save for their next set.

- **Family history of hearing loss**

- If a family has multiple children with hearing loss, that means covering a new hearing aid while still trying to pay for an older child's hearing aid. Fifteen CHAP recipients are in immediate families where 2 or more children have hearing loss; even more have siblings with hearing loss but were too old to receive assistance from CHAP.

- **Associated costs with hearing aids**

- In addition to hearing aids, a family may need to purchase:
  - Batteries cost about \$1 per battery and last for about 5-10 days depending on the size.
  - Earmolds are about \$150 each; earmolds usually need to be made:
    - every 2-3 months for an infant,
    - every 6-9 months for a toddler, and
    - every 9-12 months for a child.
  - Pediatric hearing aids usually need to be replaced every 3 years; CHAP is committed to helping parents with the first set to help allow parents to start saving for their next set.
  - Hearing aid follow-up visits may also incur a cost; part of the CHAP contract is that audiologists will see the child at no cost to the family for up to 3 years; once that 3 years is up, some companies may charge an additional annual fee to cover provider visits which can range from \$350 up to \$700.
  - Babies with hearing loss need additional gear to help retain the hearing aids on their ears which may include bonnets, toupee tape, specialty headbands, etc
  - Hearing aid insurance and/or warranties